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OUR NEW RELIGIONS.

RALPH WALDO EMERSON;

HIS WRITINGS AND OPINIONS:

A LECTURE

BY JOHN C. GEIKIE.

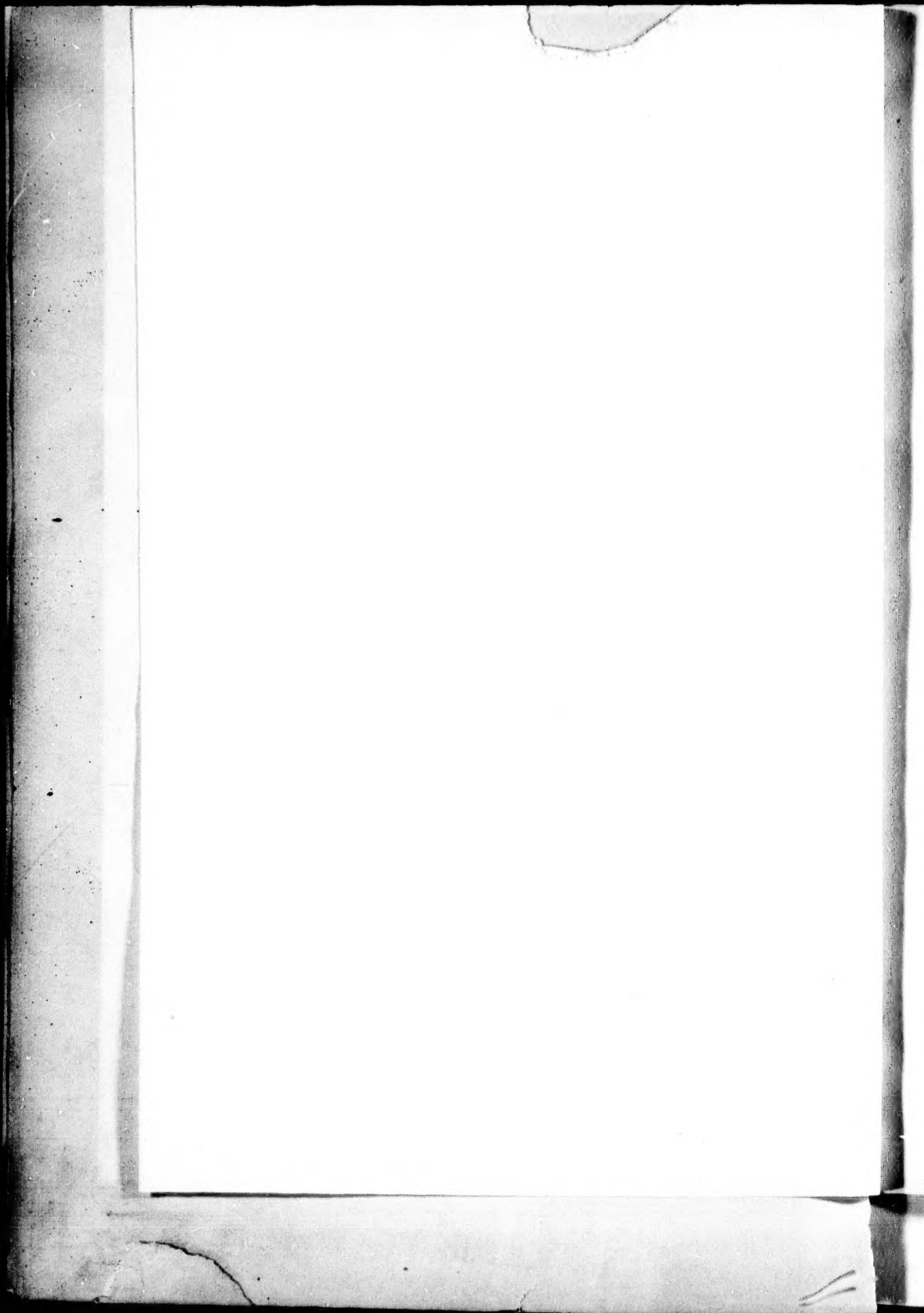
"In his mind all creation is duly respected
As parts of himself—just a little projected;
And he's willing to worship the stars and the sun,
A convert to—nothing but Emerson.
Life, Nature, Love, God, and affairs of that sort,
He looks at as merely ideas; in short
As if they were fossils stuck round in a cabinet,
Of such vast extent that our earth's a mere dab in it;
Composed just as he is inclined to conjecture her,
Namely, one part pure earth, ninety-nine parts pure lecturer."

JAMES RUSSELL LOWELL.

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1859.



TORONTO, 28th January, 1859.

JOHN C. GEIKIE, Esq.

Dear Sir,

Believing that the publication of the Lecture you lately delivered in the Temperance Hall, would be productive of much good, we respectfully request you to allow the same to be published.

We are, Dear Sir,

Yours truly,

ADAM WILSON, Q.C. (Mayor.)

A. LILLIE, D. D.

JOHN JENNINGS, D. D.

R. A. FYFE, D. D.

J. McMURRICH,

And others.

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RALPH WALDO EMERSON:

His Writings and Opinions.

RALPH WALDO EMERSON is the son of a Unitarian Clergyman of Boston, and was born about 1803. After graduating at Howard College, he became the pastor of a Unitarian Congregation in his native city. But the state of the religious body to which he belonged was, at that time, as now, so unsettled, after the movement induced by the separation from it of the orthodox Churches in Massachusetts a few years before, that uninquiring ease was impossible in any of its ministers who had ambition or earnestness. There are two doors opening from the chambers of doubt, one towards still darker and wider doubt; the other, towards the peaceful landscape of Faith, and the choice of either determines the future life. Like Blanco White or Francis Newman, Mr. Emerson, unhappily for himself and others, chose the wrong one, and, passing out into a sky in which all his old marks and certainties had become confused and bewildering, succeeding years have found him still further from that only horizon of trust and love where the spirit finds both earth and heaven alike inviting its repose. A connection of seven or eight years was sufficient to make his hearers and himself alike willing to dissolve their relations, the received worship and creed gradually falling far behind Mr. Emerson's continual saiftings.

Free, at last, Mr. Emerson abandoned a profession which tramed him, even in a denomination so liberal to the views of its teachers,

and turning altogether from the pulpit, retired to the village of Concord, where he gave himself up to the investigation of theology, morals, and philosophy. Articles in the "North American Review" on the great writers and artists of Europe, and lectures during the winter in Boston, were, in these years, his principal communications with the world of letters. In 1836, however, he came upon a larger stage by the publication of an *Essay on Nature*, in which the Pantheistic doctrines were urged to their extreme results, and a religion of Nature was sought to be substituted for revelation. Its novelty and audacity no less than a certain air of greatness in the style, and an oracular certainty assumed in its statements, attracted attention. He had now taken ground openly as the Apostle of an apparently new faith, and as such secured the position and prestige which are always conceded to those who thus force on us their own individuality. It is in the nature of men to follow rather than to lead, and to pay deference, and, in a measure, yield, to whatever asserts itself with sufficient force and persistency.

Since his successful debüt in his native country, Mr. Emerson has had the benefit of an introduction to the British public in connection with two courses of lectures—the latter of which, on *English Traits*, is the latest of his publications of any note, so far as I am aware. His published works comprise six volumes—one on *Representative Men*—two of *Essays*—one of *Miscellanies*—one of *Poems*, and his book on *England*. In the merely artistic aspect of his writings, Mr. Emerson has various excellencies, and no less various defects. His language is pure and idiomatic, and his expression has often a vigour and a happy turn which are striking and forcible. Aside from his peculiar opinions he criticises at once with a breadth of view and penetration of the spirit of his subject. But he mars his best pages with an effort at epigrammatic point which often fails; he cloaks in oracular words very ordinary facts, and deals in undefined hints and vague obscurities, through which no meaning looms to even the most attentive. His reputation, I apprehend, rests as much on these defects as on his merits, for the standard of criticism which Sir Thomas More tells us prevailed in Utopia, is not less in vogue

elsewhere, to think an author original and profound, in proportion as he is incomprehensible.

Mr. Emerson is eminently a religious author, that is, religious—as he reads religion. It is this characteristic which leads me to address you to-night, for as his zeal is, in my opinion, altogether misdirected, and is calculated in proportion to its success to do lasting injury, a review of his doctrines, separated from the decking of words in which they are set forth, and an examination of their tendencies, is desirable. There is a fashion in the scepticisms of each generation as in its literature and dress, and that which Mr. Emerson represents is at present in vogue. He has transplanted to this continent, a religion of sentiment and man-worship which was dying out in its native soil, and seeks, with the aid of some fellow-workers, to get it acclimated amongst us, and, in a measure, has succeeded, for a time. The Pantheistic tendencies of the present day have become a topic for the platform and pulpit. From their head-quarters in Boston, its Apostles, including Mr. Emerson, seek to pervade our literature with its spirit; and by introducing it mildly in their public appearances as lecturers or preachers, where they thus address the public, to float off its influences through the public mind. Differing in the length to which they push their views, these philosophic propagandists are united in the desire to overthrow Revelation. Old Cato had for his burden, “Carthage must be destroyed,” and theirs is that “Christianity must perish.” Theodore Parker, Mr. Emerson, and, I am sorry to say, the “Atlantic Monthly,” as it seems, are the leaders in this new Crusade. An American Clergyman just returned from India, expressed himself lately at a public meeting as shocked to find the progress of Pantheism in America during his fourteen years’ absence. How far the contagion has affected Canada I cannot say, but I feel bound to do my part in tearing off the mask of attractiveness from the deadly lie, and in piercing it with the Ithuriel’s Spear of Truth, that it may lose its fair dissimulations, and start into all the horrors of its naked outline.

Most of you have, perhaps, heard, or have otherwise learned, that Mr. Emerson is a representative in America of the Transcendental Philosophy which took its rise, in later times, from Immanuel Kant,

and has, since, been developed, to lengths of which he did not dream, by Fichte, Schelling, and Hegel. The name, Transcendentalism, has in it the central idea of Kant's system. In the terminology of that philosopher, it means that which transcends or rises beyond experimental knowledge, and is determined, *a priori*, without argument or proof, in regard to the principles and subjects of human knowledge. His fundamental doctrine is that all our knowledge is from within, out; not from without, *into* our minds: and that we know nothing certainly, except our own consciousness—that, is that we are. We have *ideas* respecting the appearances around us, but our knowledge of them is simply a knowledge of the forms with which the mind itself clothes them. Of the reality of the apparent objects themselves, we can know nothing. We act according to the necessity of our constitution, drawing certain conclusions, and these only, from the data nature affords. But that these conclusions, that is, that the testimony of our senses, agree with external truth, cannot be proved. If the laws of our mental action were changed, we would, according to Kant, see everything changed around us. Man is the self-complete, self-dependent Unit, amidst a universe of shadows.

This principle laid down, Kant found himself open to imputations of atheism, which he repudiated. It was urged, that, if we can know nothing certainly outside ourselves, there remain no means of proving the existence of God or any of the great doctrines of man's relation to Him. It will be remembered that revelation has no place in the sources from which Kant would derive our knowledge, for that, of course, must be from *without*. Shrinking from the desolation of a universe in which man alone existed, amidst illusions and shadows, with nothing possible to be proved except his own existence, he sought to save himself by demanding that the existence of God, the immortality of the soul, and the freedom of the will, be admitted as first truths, as the existence of man himself had been already. They were to be taken for granted as points which must be conceded as a necessary basis of a system of morals. But they could not by any possibility be proved.

The active faculties of the mind he classed under two great divi-

sions: the Understanding, which finds its fit ministry in inductive study, as of the physical sciences;—and, as a far higher agency, “Pure Reason”—that is, in common words, Imagination, or *a priori* speculation, which is to guide us intuitively into the knowledge of “absolute truth.” Understanding watches and notes the phenomena around us; Pure Reason combines its judgments, and draws general conclusions. Our “conceptions” are derived immediately from experience, and may be traced back to some experimental reality, and hence may be fitly used in the elaboration of scientific knowledge. But the far higher office of the Reason is to generalize its conclusions and create “ideas” which are the appointed means of regulating the Understanding, which can never, by itself, conduct us to essential truth. Thus the “Understanding” is left to the drudgery of life, while this faculty called Reason reigns imperially over all its higher interests. It is not likely that this theory will be perfectly clear to you, for Fichte himself, the successor of Kant in the high priesthood of German Transcendentalism, declares that he holds the writings of that philosopher to be altogether unintelligible to any one who does not know beforehand what they contain. An accurate definition of what is meant by “Pure Reason,” it appears impossible to obtain. Mr. Carlyle, who cleaves to Kant with his whole soul in this particular, tries his best to explain it in his *Miscellanies*, but all even he can do is to vilify the understanding and exalt this airy attribute in vague and general terms. “The province of the Understanding,” he says, “is of the earth, earthy; it has to do only with real, practical, and material knowledge—mathematics, physics, political economy, and such like, but must not step beyond. On the other hand, it is the province of Reason to discern virtue, true poetry, or that God exists. Its domain lies in that higher region, whither logic and argument cannot reach; in that holier region, where poetry, virtue, and divinity abide; in whose presence Understanding wavers and recoils, dazzled into utter darkness by that sea of light, at once the fountain and the termination of all true knowledge.” These are Mr. Carlyle’s words (*Mis. I.* 102, 103), and they state the creed of his school, on the fundamental point of the basis of our belief, beyond a

cavil. "Reason," whatever it be, is alone to investigate and decide on all religious questions. Man, unaided, is to climb the heavens and pierce their secrets; and in so doing, he is to discard all help from "logic or argument," from the testimony of his senses and the accumulation of proof. The inductive principle which alone has wrested secular knowledge from the dreams of fancy, and made progress possible, is to be shunned in all questions of morals or religion. Proofs from any source are to be discarded. Vague thoughts, uncertain feelings, intuitions and impressions are to decide without question or appeal in morals and faith. Such is Kant's system in its practical bearings. Its deadly opposition to Revelation is on its forehead. Man is henceforth, according to this doctrine, to make his own Religion by revelations of his own reason; he is to hold out his flaring candle into the dark and deem it illumination. Mr. Emerson follows in the footsteps of this theory with a zeal which his words can express, apparently, only feebly. He speaks of "the wintry light of the understanding," "the despotism of the senses:" "its officious activity is to be renounced" and "free and ample leave to be given to the spontaneous sentiment (what does this mean?) if we would be great;" "the low views and utilitarian hardness of men are owing to their working on the world with the understanding only." We are to discard it henceforth if we would know the truth. The source of our knowledge of truth is thus metaphorically stated: "The doors of the temple stand open day and night, before every man, and the oracles of the truth cease never; yet it is guarded by one condition; this, namely; it is an intuition." That is, we learn it on the instant without examination or reflection; we have an intuitive perception of its being truth without the intervention of testimony or argument. All the truths which it takes a whole Bible to tell are thus to flash from the reason at a stroke, and light up the secrets of the Universe! This "intuition" is very commonly spoken of by Mr. Emerson under the more familiar name of "genius;" an epithet varied elsewhere by the statement that "the essence of all religion" is "the sentiment of virtue," but this, too, "is an intuition;"—a looking into it directly, without a medium, and as by a law of our being. Kant tells us that the

"spontaneous intuitions of positive reason are *the standard in the soul* by which we are to judge the claims of any object of adoration or article of belief," and I might put the words in Mr. Emerson's mouth, so exactly do they state his constantly repeated sentiment. But is it true that reason is thus fit to create for man a Religion—that he can make one for himself and will be under no obligation to his Maker for any help in the matter? If so, why is the doctrine so powerless on the mass of mankind? Why did we never see an example of its truth in any nation? Whence the sunken immorality of Greece with all its philosophers? Is there in the general consciousness a corroboration of this doctrine? Does not the history of the temples, offerings, prayers, priesthoods, literature, public and private life of all ages give it the lie? Everywhere, from all the generations of our race, a need of help from above has been felt; and can the vain self-sufficiency of a few metaphysicians be set up to neutralize the sorrowing confession of a world? Are we prepared to abdicate our honours as thinking beings thus? Is the Baconian method to remain the glory of the world, and the only received basis of knowledge, in all other domains of the intellect, but to be barred out if it attempt to lift a footstep into the territory of morals? Are we to return to the "sand-wastes and mirage of a speculative theology," as Coleridge aptly calls them, and instead of gathering and collating the facts which God has strewn over the face of nature, and of human experience, and of Revelation, instead of using these to deduce sure generalizations and thus sound our way with patient toil toward the indisputable, are we to be flung back into misty hypotheses, and *a priori* dreams? Are we to discard contemptuously, without a hearing, a Record purporting to be a Revelation of the laws of our moral constitution, a record endorsed by the grateful faith of the wise and good through untold generations; are we contemptuously to reject it without examination, without argument, despising its proffered evidences, and scouting the condescension of any criticism of its claims, deciding against it by the easy process of an intuition, vaulting over the encircling hills into Paradise, as Satan of old into Eden, by the wondrous spring-board of this mental magic?

John Dryden, in his *Religio Laici*, puts the claims of reason in a light as beautiful as it is striking :

"Dim as the borrowed beams of moon and stars
To lonely, weary, wandering travellers,
Is reason to the soul ; and, as on high,
Those rolling fires discover but the sky,
Not light us here ; so reason's glimmering ray,
Was lent, not to assure one doubtful way,
But guide us upwards to a better day."

Apart from the artless confession of the heart and the lessons of experience, the results of the worship of reason in Kant's own country are enough to keep us from trusting to our own speculations and sentimental fancies in morals and religion. The old fable of Phaeton attempting to drive the chariot of the sun, has been re-acted, and presumption has set the sphere of truth and spiritual law a-blaze as his, erewhile, did the material heavens. We shall see before we close what a dancing will-of-the-wisp reason is in Mr. Emerson's own case, and how foolishly it has bemired himself.

As he has accepted Kant's theory of Pure Reason, so our author has no less fervently adopted his teachings on the fundamental laws of knowledge. A "noble doubt" he tells us, "perpetually suggests itself, * * whether nature outwardly exists. *It is a sufficient account of that appearance we call the world, that God will teach a human mind*, and so makes it the receiver of a certain number of *congruent sensations* which we call sun and moon, man and women, house and trade. In my utter impotence to test the authenticity of the report of my senses, to know whether the impressions they make on me correspond with out-lying objects, what difference does it make whether Orion is up there in heaven, or some god paints the image in the firmament of the soul?" "Nature," with him, "is a phenomenon, not a substance"—the Universe is "the great apparition shining so peacefully on us." Without troubling you with metaphysics, I leave common sense to supply the corrective to these echoes of Germany. If you wish to see them demolished scientifically, you may turn to Reid, or Stewart, or Hamilton.

I leave you to judge the measure of reliance to be placed on the

guidance of one to whom his fellow men, and the varied scenery of the earth and heavens, are only so many sensations and so many apparitions.

After Kant came Fichte as the next hierarch of German philosophy. Checked by no such *ar* of consequences as Kant, he at once discarded the fundamental truths that philosopher had assumed as necessary, while confessing their incapability of proof. Fichte reduced our only certain knowledge to that of our own existence, which he admitted as a first truth requiring no argument, but the right to assume anything further was given up. The formula of Des Cartes—*Cogito ergo sum*—"I think, therefore I am," was virtually the motto of Fichte. But the absolute solitude of man in the universe, thus implied, left its countless phenomena unexplained. The empty Infinite around must be filled with at least the appearance of intelligent agency, and, for this, the illusions of Pantheism offered the necessary aid. Cherished for immemorial ages along the ancient rivers of the east, they had travelled to the west before the days of Plato, and had been, through the history of early philosophy, the favourite doctrines of the educated few, when Polytheism held sway with the mass; and Revelation was confined to the hills of Judea. Their dreamy vagueness and the scope it gives for poetic sensibility has always made them attractive, while their airy abstraction has no less unfitted them for securing the interest of mankind at large. In modern times they owe their revival in Western Europe mainly to the dislike of Spinoza to Revelation, and through him they have gained their latest introduction as the basis of a philosophical religion. Seeing their fitness for his want, Fichte embraced them with ardour, and inaugurated the era which Mr. Emerson labours to make permanent. As a middle position between the acceptance of a personal God and the black vacuity of Atheism, he adopted the Pantheistic doctrine of one absolute existence in all things—in the "Me"—that is in man, and in the "Not Me"—that is the universe at large; one undefined and undefinable spiritual essence pervading all things.—Man and the universe were thus alike conceded a spiritual reality. Our common idea of matter, Fichte, however, would not at all admit.

A pervading soul, the same in the world around, and in man himself, was the one lonely and mysterious truth. As the highest manifestation of this all-inhabiting force, man is, of course, in Fichte's view, as in Kant's, above the need of any revelation. Indeed, a revelation is impossible, for man is himself the purest revelation of the Divine. It is an affront to our nature to speak of it. Thus another step was taken in the progress of error. After Fichte, came Schelling, who pushed the Pantheistic doctrines of his predecessors still further. By an "intuitive" glance he discovered that the mind and external nature are not only mere modifications of the one Universal Existence, but that man, as the highest manifestation of the Divine, learns, in the processes of his own thought, the secret of the nature of this existence—that, in short, the processes of thought are identical with those of creation, so that were we to construct the universe in thought, by logical deduction, we would do virtually the same thing as Deity does in developing himself into the forms and regions of creation. Thus Man becomes, by this theory, really God. The baseless hypothesis, from which such results are drawn, is a striking sample of what *intuition* accomplishes, as the standard of the truth. The "intellectual intuition" of Schelling—which is only a fuller development of what others call simply "intuition"—was supposed to open to us the whole secrets of nature, and to enable us, without "reasoning" or "argument," to lay bare the whole processes of its darkest mysteries. Induction was thrown to the winds, and "the science of all things" was created from the lawless dreams of hypothesis, as Wordsworth's grand city in the clouds shaped itself from the shifting vapours of the air.

The mantle of Philosophy next rested on the shoulders of Hegel whose expansions and corrections of former speculations have seemed to some of his followers so admirable that they have not scrupled to apply to him the words of the Apostle, "When that which is perfect is come, that which is, in part, shall be done away." Determined to avoid the appearance of taking anything for granted as a first truth, he went back a step further than any of his most adventurous predecessors. Not willing to yield even the solitary postulate of our

own being, he started from the gloomy premises that neither the existence of the world, nor our own, can be certainly known. The mind itself and the objects of our perceptions are, with Hegel, alike beyond the reach of our proofs, and our whole domain of assurance lies in the relations between the mind seeing and what is seen. These alone, according to him, can be affirmed to be realities. To form an idea, there need to be two opposites. The conception of a tree needs both the mind and the tree, before it can exist, and from the mutual influence of the two, the idea of it springs; and ideas thus derived, are the only realities in the universe. As they could not exist but for their relations, the relationship is the *only absolute reality* to be found, the one truth, that is—God. This process of the evolution of Ideas is the process of our Being, and likewise of all Being, that is—it is the Absolute—it is God. Every human thought is a thought of the One great Divine mind. Being and thought are identical, and thus God is a process continually going on, but never accomplished; the Divine consciousness is absolutely one with the advancing consciousness of mankind; the conceptions of the human mind are, alone, in their constant development—the Divine. Our thought, and God, are identical. Here, then, we have reached the highest flight of Transcendentalism, the sublimated perfection of speculation, and it gives as its product a Universe with nothing real but ideas, and no God through all its dreary spaces but the pulsations of human thought. Thus God is annihilated, silence lifts its leaden sceptre over all things, and man, a phantasm himself, is left to look out on an empty infinity amidst whose shadows there stirs no motion of intelligence. What a result for so much philosophy! One is reminded involuntarily of a Scripture text: "Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools." It is hard to put such abstract speculations in simple words, and I know not whether I have been able to do it altogether correctly or clearly, for even Germans have their sects in interpreting these systems. De Quincy affirms, indeed, that fully a thousand books have been written to clear up what Kant is supposed to have meant, and his followers are no less misty than their apostle. With the developements of Hegelianism I shall not trouble you, but you will

see the connection of the modern Continental philosophy, as a whole, with my subject, in the fact that Mr. Emerson fills his urn with light at their central fire, and is rather a pale reflection of them than an originator for himself. We have hence, in Mr. Emerson's writings, along with Kant's Idealism, all the varying dreams of the Pantheism of his successors. He believes in no intelligent existence except man, but, hesitating to adopt the conclusion that the Universe is a fortuitous concourse of atoms, disbelieving, indeed, that it is more than the reflection of our own thought from so many shadows and appearances, he adopts the ultra Pantheistic theory of the unity and identity of all things as only varying manifestations of the Divine. Disbelieving in a Personal God, he embodies such of His attributes as please Him in the spirit of man, and, in a lower degree, in the phenomena of the heavens and the earth around us. But the adequate utterance of a creed like this, in the dialects of the too practical west, is a difficult task. Mr. Emerson, therefore, following the example of his German instructors, betakes himself to the sufficiently distant and venerable Brahminism of India for a becoming statement. Jesus Christ is with him a far more lightly esteemed authority than Krishna, and the Bible nothing alongside the Vedas and the Puranas of Hindooism. He lets Vishnu—the member of the Hindoo triad, speak for him, thus: "The whole world is but a manifestation of Vishnu, who is identical with all things, and is to be regarded by the wise as not differing from, but as the same as themselves. I neither am going nor coming; nor is my dwelling in any one place; nor art thou, thou; nor are others, others; nor am I, I." As if, says he, "He had said, All is for the soul, and the soul is Vishnu; and animals and stars are transient paintings, and light is whitewash,* * and heaven itself a decoy." Elsewhere, he gives his estimate of himself, thus—"I am nothing; I see all; the currents of the Universal Being circulate through me; I am part and parcel of God." A personal God is thus utterly rejected; the world is God, and God is the world, with man as his highest manifestation. Shooting far ahead of Kant's assumed first truths of the existence of God, man's free will and immortality, he stops only with the annihilation of them all.

It grates sadly on Mr. Emerson's sensibilities that any one should be willing to stand indebted to the past for his religion. It is a favourite theme with the school he represents, as it has been since the days of Spinoza, that everything in faith which is old and venerable is worthless—as if morals grew old, or truth decayed. Carlyle tells us that the "old Jew stars" (the Bible) "are gone out." Mr. Emerson asks, "why should we grope among the dry bones of the past or put the living generation into masquerade out of its faded wardrobe?" "Let us demand our own works and laws and worship." Now, without discussing the question how new moralities can be possible, any more than new laws of numbers or of any other eternal truths, how can that which was wrong, essentially, yesterday, be right to day, or how can each generation have a new worship, unless each is to find the former in error for ever? I beg you to keep this doctrine of Mr. Emerson's in mind, as we trace the outline of his philosophy. You shall judge how much the sneer at the Bible is worth from one who reverently accepts translations of the interminable Vedas and Puranas of Hindooism, with their mysticism, their puerilities, and their frequently false moralities, in its place: and the originality will no less strike you, which is, throughout, only a faint lunar reflection of other men's thoughts.

Mr. Emerson has adopted in full Hegel's notion of the Identity of the Divinity with the Human Consciousness—that is, that thought is the one absolute Truth, or God—and we know that man's Thought, the ideas developed from his mental action, are all he admits to exist. "Empedocles," says he, "undoubtedly spoke a truth of thought—(respecting thought) when he said, 'I am God.'"—"That which once existed in Intellect as pure Law," he tells us, "has now taken a body as Nature." But as he does not believe that nature has a Body in our sense, but is an Apparition, this is only a round-about way of informing us that he thinks Intellect God—and as he allows of no reality but our own thoughts—the ideas springing from us—it next follows that God and man are interchangeable terms, and, that each means the other; as, moreover, Man is ever developing, so must God be; and thus we have for God, nothing but

the flow of human thought as it streams on—we have God daily growing under our eyes!

It may well startle us to hear a man in this day of the world thus seek to annihilate God and put man in his place, but it is a central doctrine of Mr. Emerson, that "that which shews God out of me, makes me a wart and a wen." So that outside man there is no God. "So much of nature," says he, "as man is ignorant of, so much of his own mind does he not yet possess." But nature is only a phantasm shining round the one Reality—the Absolute—the Divine, which shews itself through it. So that, as nature is only our own mind, and God is nature—there is no God apart from Human Thought. Of what value is the talk about not wearing the cast off garments of other men's faith, when Mr. Emerson presents himself thus in the precise costume of Hegel.

But to serve only one master would be more than could be hoped, when the reins are thrown on the neck of speculation. It is the bane of all who turn their backs on the Presence of the Lord, which shines through the system of The Truth, to find no rest thenceforth for ever. German speculation has gradually brought a confusion into all the departments of moral truth it has invaded, only to be equalled by that of Hindooism, the tangled skein of whose mythology no one would essay to unravel. Mr. Emerson is no exception to this law. Germany will not do without the addition of India. With a credulity which, as Mr. Monckton Milnes said of Harriet Martineau, will believe anything provided it be not in the Bible, he sits at the feet of pundits when he openly despises prophets, and lauds the oracles of Benares, when he scoffs at those of Mount Zion. The doctrine of transmigration seems to find favour with him. As the Brahmin believes that he has existed in other forms on earth before the present life, and, unless specially pleasing to Brahma, will have still further migrations hereafter, so Mr. Emerson speaks of the "Deity sending each soul into nature, to perform one more turn through the circle of beings"—language which a Hindoo would think very orthodox and pious. "The soul," says he, "having been often born, or as the Hindoos say, 'travelling the path of existence through thou-

sands of births,' having beheld the things which are here, those which are in heaven, and those which are beneath, there is nothing of which she has not gained the knowledge; no wonder that she is able to recollect, in regard to anything, what she formerly knew." This is the quintessence of the Brahmin doctrine of Transmigration: the repetition in this late century of the world of the misty guess borrowed from India, of Socrates, groping after the Truth, amidst the gross darkness of his day—2200 years ago—his long vanished doctrine of Reminiscence. So much for getting a new religion at the hands of Mr. Emerson.

In the doctrine of immortality Mr. Emerson has no steadfast belief. Here and there we find a faint protest by his better nature against the monstrous tenets of his creed; but the general tenor of his writings holds out nothing better to us after death, if we be not sent into the world again in some other body, than absorption into Nature, that is Annihilation.

There is something very sad in the following confession of darkness and ignorance in which, after all, his Divine Rank as "part of God" leaves him on the great question of our future fate—"I cannot tell if these wonderful qualities which house to-day in this mortal frame, shall ever re-assemble in equal activity in a similar frame, or whether they have before had a natural history like that of this body you see before you; but this one thing I know, that these *qualities* did not now begin to exist, cannot be sick with my sickness, nor buried in any grave; but that they circulate through the Universe,"—that is, are absorbed into the great ocean of Being. Thus, in one page he doubts the sentiments of the other, and confesses himself in ignorance on the question which, in its various relations, is alone worth asking by us here. Compared with this, how grand is the dream of Socrates when he saw a beautiful and majestic woman, clad in white garments, approaching him as he lay in prison and about to die, and calling to him and saying, "Socrates, three days hence you will reach fertile Phthia!" But especially, compared to this, how unspeakably grand, the serene composure with which Christianity teaches us to anticipate the tomb, and how touching and joyous to our innermost

heart of hearts, the triumph with which it invests the last passages of life—a triumph embodied in the chaunt of St. Paul when the radiance of the Eternal Hills, as his voyage was closing, glittered from afar—and he breaks out uncontrollably, "O Death, where is thy Sting? O Grave where is thy Victory? the sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law; but, thanks be to God, who giveth us the Victory, through our Lord Jesus Christ!"

Mr. Emerson's general opinion, when for a time he shakes off his misgivings, seems to be that we will hereafter be absorbed into the one soul of all things, as the Brahmin hopes to be absorbed in Brahma. It is involved in his devotion to Hegel that he should think so. "The individual," he tells us, "is ascending out of his limits into a Catholic existence." We are, it would seem, but as waves which rise from the deep for a moment, to sink and lose themselves in it the next. "Death is but the return of the individual to the infinite," and man is annihilated, though the Deity will eternally live.

Mr. Emerson has no such doctrine in his creed as that of the freedom of the Human will, that great truth of our nature, which involves our accountability and dignifies us with the characteristics of intelligent beings. Since, in his opinion, to use his own words—"the human race is God in distribution," there can be no Power from without to influence us either for good or evil, and, as we act according to the necessity of our constitution, and its laws are fixed, and since we have no personality, but are only waves of the Universal Light, we move on without power of control and without responsibility. "Let man learn," says he, "that he is here, not to work, but to be worked upon." "The Spiritualist," he tells us, "cannot bring himself to believe either in divine Providence or in the immortality of the soul." Thus does this ghastly Gospel extinguish hope. For immortality we are to have annihilation, for moral freedom, as necessary to responsibility, we are to have only the irresponsible working of unintelligent machines; and for Providence we are to have Fate, which "grows over us like grass,"—that is, as the grass grows over the unresisting and helpless dead. Is this the new Evangel! A world without immortality, and crushed under

the wheels of inexorable destiny ! It reminds us of the agonies of the old Roman epitaphs, when broken hearts and crushed hopes cried out into the darkness of the old Pagan sky, in sad helpless bewailings at cruel death and relentless doom. Mr. Emerson must excuse us for preferring the revelation of a God who is also a Father, and a hope which bathes the future in glory.

With free will, Mr. Emerson, necessarily, and no less pointedly, discards everything like the doctrine of the different qualities of actions. To do right, or to do wrong, makes no difference in the result. Indeed, there is no such thing as wrong in his opinion. "Ethics," he tells us, "degrade nature," as does also "religion." "The less we have to do with our sins," says he, "the better." * "Evil is good in the making, * * The Divine effort is never relaxed; the carrion in the sun will convert itself to grass and flowers; and man, though in brothels, or gaols, or on gibbets, is on his way to all that is good and true." We are told that "Nature"—that is, God, the Divine Existence,—for Nature, in so far as it strikes the eye, is only an Apparition to Mr. Emerson—"is *no Saint*. * * She comes eating and drinking and sinning. Her darlings, the great, the strong, the beautiful, are not children of our law, do not come out of the Sunday School, nor weigh their food, nor punctually keep the commandments." "The entertainment of the proposition of depravity," he tells us, "is the last profligacy and profanation." Now, when we strip all this of its high sounding verbiage, to what does it amount ? "Ethics," that is, a system of moral principles, "degrade nature." Henceforth, therefore, no virtue should be taught, no duty insisted on, no reasons for either should be assigned. Man is self-luminous, like the fixed stars, and gives but receives no light. Our duties, to man or our neighbour, are to be left hereafter to the influence of our individual "moral sentiment." Cannibals and philosophers, alike, are to look within for their articles of belief, and codes of morals. The prospects of a millenium must be bright indeed if mankind adopt such a doctrine. That "evil is good in the making," I wholly deny. Thomson was right in speaking of God as "from *seeming* evil still educating good, and better still, in infinite progression." But to say that evil and good should be different names for the same thing—

that wrong can turn right by growth—is simply to utter an outrage on all our moral sensibilities. Is it a truth that “man, though in brothels, or gaols, or on gibbets, is on his way to all that is good and true?” Then morality is of no account, licentiousness is as good as virtue; theft, and all other crimes that fill gaols, as good as their opposites, and it is as well for a man to close a life of infamy by a crime which sends him to die by the halter, as to fall before the great Reaper like a shock of corn fully ripe, after a career adorned by every public and private excellence! But however this may shock the instinctive sentiments of the mass of humanity, Mr. Emerson not only preaches it in his own words but enforces it by a quotation from his favourite Indian divinity, Vishnu.—“I am the same to all mankind. There is not one who is worthy of my love or hatred. They who serve me with adoration, I am in them and they in me. If one whose ways are altogether evil, serve me alone, he is as respectable as the just man; he is altogether well employed; he soon becometh of a virtuous spirit, and obtaineth eternal happiness.” Simple minded people may find it hard to conceive how the service of any Divine Being can be compatible with “ways which are wholly evil.” In all ages and countries it has been thought that virtue was pleasing to the gods, and vice the reverse, but what kind of service can possibly remain where there is no virtue, but where a man’s ways are thus *wholly vile*? The affections can have no part in it, for they are sold to wickedness; the mere outward form remains. Either, then, crime is as much the service of Mr. Emerson’s God as virtue, or he dignifies mere genuflexions and postures by that name. If the former, he outrages the universal sentiment of humanity; if the latter, he dignifies the stuffed skin of worship with living honours, and his lofty speech is an eulogy on mummery. Such a confusion of right and wrong, such a premium on crime and discouragement of virtue, if Mr. Emerson were followed, would dissolve society. Where would we be if the restraints of the world-wide doctrine that virtue is itself blessed and leads to blessedness, and that vice is accursed and leads to ruin, were abolished? That they are, is the doctrine of Mr. Emerson; that they are the opposite poles of moral being, is the teaching of Christianity. He has made his choice, I

have made mine and am willing to abide by it, here and hereafter.

As might be expected in one who preaches the divinity of man, and that there is no freedom of the human will, and no immortality, Mr. Emerson is especially offended by the so called fanaticism of those who rise to enthusiasm in the contemplation of the truths of Christianity. Like and unlike are, however, often linked by subtle ties. He lays down rules for the elevation of the religious affections which, I fear, are far less sober than the frames he so much dislikes. His God is himself, seen in the multiform shapes of nature, from which, by the way, it is only one step to get to the fetish and the idol. Of course worship is required, but what it is it would be hard to gather from Mr. Emerson's books. We are to let our hearts throb, with the throbbing heart of nature—we are to commune with the spirit of the stars, and woods, and fields, but what that means we are not precisely informed. One passage alone seems clear enough to quote. "To lead a heavenly life, one is to listen with insatiable ears to the voice which speaks to us from behind, till he rises to an 'ecstatic state,' and becomes careless of his food and of his house, and is the fool of ideas." Or he is "to go and be dumb, and sit with his hands on his mouth, a long austere Pythagorean lustrum." Christianity tells us to do Christ's will if we would know his doctrine, but Mr Emerson substitutes the dreaming of the mystic for this healthful medicine of action. To get so ecstatic, it is not said with what, as to become careless of our food, and of our house, that is, of our duties, and to be the fool of ideas, and to sit dumb, with our hands on our mouths, is surely little better than a rendering into English of the rule of the Bhagavad Gita—the favourite book of the Hindoos, which Mr. Emerson loftily eulogises—that the devotee who "can sit for days looking at the point of his nose and thinking of nothing," has arrived at the pinnacle of religious perfection.

When there is nothing definite in a creed, but only vague generalities, impalpable metaphysics, and oracular bursts, emerging from darkness and sinking into it again before the close of a paragraph, it is like trying to catch the flicker on the wall, to follow and grasp its parts. Ossian fighting in a cloud with ghosts, had not a task more hopeless. That there is no system in Pantheism, that there

is no relation of parts, no consistency, that it is not founded on facts, that it is not science based on induction from facts, and that it cannot be proved to be a revelation, is a sufficient refutation of its claims. Its tendencies, personal and relative, add their weight to its condemnation.

It might be expected that Mr. Emerson wholly rejects anything like the positive morals of the Bible. He declaims not only against Christianity and the Bible, but Churches and Sabbath-schools, and benevolent associations are only food for a sneer. Prayer, is to him, supremely ridiculous. "The dull pray," says he "Geniuses," that is, those especially filled with the Divine Spirit, "are light mockers." Anything like an inculcation of the virtues which the Bible imposes as the standard of Christian manhood, is not to be found in his writings. Like the Brahmin who holds that the devotee who neglects all temples, creeds, holy places, oblations and offerings to the Gods, and just lifts a thought to Brahma, or meditates on Om, is holier than the laborious pilgrim who toils from afar to pay the duties of his faith, Mr. Emerson tells us that he leads a heavenly life who falls into reveries in the contemplation of the landscape, while no such estimate is accorded where poetic sensibility is deficient, though every day may be adorned by unostentatious acts of practical godliness.

From the theory that all things are one and the same, mere phenomena of the one thinking principle, Mr. Emerson deduces results in natural science which are startling enough, and merit quotation as a means of judging how far one who is so grievously wrong in minor details is trustworthy in the higher regions of truth. We are gravely informed that the reason why natural philosophers know about the substances on which they bestow their study is that they are *identical with them*. "Animated chlorine knows of chlorine, and animated zinc knows of zinc. Their quality makes his career, and he can variously publish their virtues, *because they compose him*." A man who can put in print such jargon as this must, surely, illustrate Addison's theory that only a thin membrane in the brain, sometimes well nigh invisible, decides whether one be a fool or a philosopher.

Mr Emerson adds to his doctrine of the development of all things from the universal soul, as phantasmal manifestations of itself, the more material doctrine of the "Vestiges of Creation," that a transmutation of species is gradually raising the lowest form to the highest. Lamarok and De Maillet have found a new disciple in Mr. Emerson. But we all know the baselessness of this theory. Exploded as it is, Mr. Emerson brings it forward as corroborative of his system.—Whether his unfairness or knowledge be to blame, I leave to each to determine. The Nebular Hypothesis is, in the same manner, pressed by him into his services. "All things," he tells us, "are perfecting. The nebula tends to be a ring, a comet, a globe, and parent of new stars." But Lord Rosse's telescope dissipated this theory long ago, so that, as it is one of the grand facts by which Mr. Emerson supports his scheme of nature, the value of the whole may be fairly judged from the unsoundness of this part of the foundation.

It is a characteristic of the class to which Mr. Emerson belongs, to resort to tricks of language and to bold assertion, without regard to correctness, to bolster their cause. To smooth their way, the venerable phraseology of revelation is still retained, while it is made to speak an entirely opposite sense to that which it usually bears. The unwary reader is thrown off his guard by finding the words of Scripture often preserved, and it is only when he remembers the context that he starts at the snare. With a similar aim, no statement is too reckless, no lightly thrown off insinuation too baseless, to be withheld, if the one darling object can be furthered, of lowering the prestige and authority of Christianity. One example from many will suffice.

In his lecture on Plato, he ventures the statement, that the Phædo supersedes the necessity of Christianity, since "Calvinism is in it, Christianity is in it." His sketch of Plato and his works is based, as appears from Mr. Emerson's chance admission, on the Translation published in Bohn's Library, a source which saves much labour, but is not fitted to enhance his claim to discourse on the "American Scholar," which forms the theme of one of his prelections. Following his example, any one may, at once, see how utterly unfounded is the assertion. Christianity is not in the Phædo, but, at best, there is a dim glimpse of the great truth of our immortality seen painfully

and faintly, as when one strains to distinguish an object in the brown twilight. But assertion is potent, and, made thus recklessly and authoritatively, might pass unchallenged by most. Is it consistent with the philosophic character to try to underrate a religion he dislikes, by affecting to believe that its revelations were anticipated, when to read the authority he quotes, is to see the disproof of the insinuation?

One of the most uniform characteristics of minds of a high class, is their depth of reverential feeling and a certain solemnity of thought in the presence of great Truths. There is a subdued sadness running like slow distant music through real genius. Shakspeare tells us that

"All our joys most pure and holy,
Sport in the shadow caught from Melancholy——:"

Mr. Carlyle, though a Pantheist, like Mr. Emerson, has that great-heartedness and the true poet's eye that sees into the depths of things, but his American copyist does not move a muscle, where *he* fetches a sigh. In the Pantheistic confession of faith, published by John Sterling, as that of Mr. Carlyle, and accepted by him, there is a deep and earnest sadness, such as a loving soul could not fail to shew, in looking at a world where "Evil, Grief, Horror, Shame, Follies, Errors, and Frailties, of all kinds, press on the eye and heart," especially when no faith in Providence, or Redemption, or Immortality, relieves the shade. But Mr. Emerson dwells so wholly on the superficial as never to pierce to the real sad grandeur beneath. "As shallow streams run dimpling all the way," he wears an unbroken simper, sees nothing but the holiday dress of the world, and has a Heaven no higher than that of the Greeks, who thought that Olympus almost touched it. Even the idea of God, so glorious and awful to any reverential mind, is not lofty enough with him to keep him from gross familiarity. He speaks of "God's grand politeness"—as if his God were altogether on a level with himself. Contrast this with Jonathan Edwards, with his almost angelic intellect, rising, in spite of his unimaginative cast, into the sweetest poetry, when he tells us, in his *Book on the Affections*, how he used to be so filled with the sense of the Divine Majesty and Glory, that he would sit and

singing them in a low voice to himself in the fields. Or take Milton's Hymn put into the mouth of our great parent, Adam—which Burke's son died in repeating—or take any of all the utterances of lofty souls when gazing on the Majesty of the Almighty, and the contrast is complete. Mr. Emerson's creed quenches his imagination, and poisons his heart. With nothing nobler than man and nothing grander than our checkered and momentary life, he is chained to the earth, and has only a ghastly smile where Faith glows like a seraph. The same bad taste and inability to conceive any grand Ideal, marks his writings throughout. Jesus is a '*hero*,' in his vocabulary, and "we cloy of Him as of all such; if we get too much of Him, *He becomes a bore at last*." Even the goodness and purity, the infinite love and gentleness, which won the eulogy of Rousseau, wake no momentary enthusiasm in slow speaking, stony Mr. Emerson. Listen to the respectful mention he makes of what is most sacred to most of English speaking men. "The Universe," he tells us, "has three children, which re-appear under different names in every system of human thought, whether they be called Cause, Operation and Effect; or more poetically, Jove, Neptune, Pluto; or, theologically, the Father, the Spirit and the Son." Another sprig of deadly night-shade from his rhetorical bouquets is as follows—"Meantime there are not wanting gleams of a better light,—occasional examples of the action of man upon nature with his entire force, with reason as well as understanding. Such examples are the traditions of miracles in the earliest antiquity of all nations, the history of Jesus Christ; the achievements of a principle, as in political and religious revolutions, and in the abolition of the Slave Trade; the miracles of Swedenborg, Hohenlohe, and the Shakers; many obscure and yet contested facts, now arranged under the name of Animal Magnetism; prayer, eloquence, self-healing, and the wisdom of Children?" How admirable the candour, how delicate the propriety, how modest, how humble, to class together Jesus Christ, Prince Hohenlohe, Anne Lee, and the Spirit Rappers! The perversion of intellect, not to speak of heart, which could venture on such a farrago, is only equalled by the unmeaning rant it is meant to sustain.

Having heard from the pen of its own Apostle these statements of

its doctrines, what shall we say of Pantheism as a scheme of religious philosophy? Can we accept it as true, when tried at the bar of philosophy itself? Most assuredly we cannot. The same processes of thought by which Mr. Emerson reaches the belief that He himself exists, carry us on to what he rejects, the idea of a great First Cause. Pantheism is the first step in an argument, with the rest a-wanting, and stands useless as a broken arch. Does it satisfy the demands of the imagination in things of religion—those demands which are pictures reflected from the heart on the brain? Assuredly not. "It is a stream without a spring, a tree without a root, a shadow projected by no substance, a sound without a voice, a drama without an author, a pervading thought without a thinking mind, a Universe without a God." Do its doctrines meet any better fate when tried by the standard to which they appeal, "the moral sentiment" of the race? The testimony in each of us to the prevalence of law, the obligation of right, the consequences of wrong, the perpetual government of an invisible God, the need of redemption, and the inexpressible grandeur and fitness of the *revealed* future, frown down the monstrous untruthfulness of the theology and morals Mr. Emerson seeks to advance.

As Mr. Emerson's views have been given in his own language, if they have failed to be understood, the fault must be with himself. Such as they are, they are strewn over his writings, where they lie imbedded in a fair breadth of reading, though unequal and fragmentary,—a fertility of expression, often energetic and striking—pleasing turns of fancy, and a cold but frequent admiration of the beautiful in nature, and, at the same time, with platitudes often offered for wisdom—the cuttle fish policy of ejecting darkness where there is difficulty—huge self-complacency everywhere radiant—swelling sentences that need only to be pricked to collapse—and a great display of what is sought to be passed off as philosophy but is simply so much fustian. Continually speaking of what he calls mysteries, it is not to be supposed that he can himself very clearly comprehend or set them in words. His pages always remind me of a blotted water-colour sketch—a bit of the landscape here, and a fraction of a figure elsewhere, but only a parti-coloured blur for the rest.

Is it desirable or not that this philosophy be accepted as better than Christianity, or should we still cleave to the old? At the risk of repetition, let us recapitulate briefly the characteristics of both. If, then, we turn to the scope of their teaching, they differ at once. Mr. Emerson and his school do not preach to the mass, but rather affect to despise their rudeness and their blunt ignorance which requires proof as a condition of belief. Culture, with him, is to bring about the reign of the good and true. It is to quicken the sensibilities, and fit for that intuitive insight which perceives the highest truths by a glance, and by those who do not possess it, he does not hope to be understood. Christianity addresses itself to man as a whole, and claims his acceptance by the strength of its proofs. Philosophy never raised either a nation or a tribe: Christianity has clothed the naked savage, given his language form and system, exchanged his war-club for a spade, set his child to school, and led himself from ferocity and degradation to a life of gentleness, honour and love. Mr. Emerson's God is a vast dreamy abstraction, unknown—incapable of definition—a mere apotheosis of collective man, for he tells us that "Man is God in distribution"—with no bond of sympathy with His creatures so as to direct their will, or form their character, or attract their love. Christianity discloses a Father in the Heavens, the Great Archetype of all Fatherhood—with open hand, and benignant eye, and loving voice, and a care which is over all our ways. Mr. Emerson never thinks of directing us to his conception of God, for comfort, or hope, or confidence in trial: Christianity tells us that Jehovah is the shadow of a great rock in a weary land, the Father of mercies and the God of all consolation. And, indeed, in the craving of the soul in all countries after a Personal God—a craving so intense that even in India, the native home of Pantheism, Rajah Rammohun Roy declared that Polytheism, which gives every man a Personal God of his own, was a deep and sincere belief—and in the perfect counterpart to every want of the spirit presented in the Revelation of Jehovah, lie a sufficient refutation of Pantheism, and vindication of the Scriptures. Voltaire's saying is right—"Si Dieu n'existait pas, il faudrait l'inventer." Pantheism tells us that in sounding the depths of one man's thoughts, we sound the depths

of the Universe—that if we know ourselves, we know all the secrets of Being, but our instinctive sense recoils from the assertion. Christianity, on the other hand, chords with our innate conviction in asking, instead, who can, by searching, find out God; who can find out the Almighty to perfection? Mr. Emerson's theory is opposed throughout to the moral sentiment of the race. The one ceaseless beam of his theology is, that man is all to himself, Law, Lord, Saviour, God, the Universe, and thus at a sweep he destroys all the relations we would bear to a Personal God. He preaches Fate—Christianity whispers Providence. He abolishes all moral government, confounds the qualities of actions, obliterates the phraseology of right and wrong, obedience and sin, from the vocabulary—dismisses all responsibility from human acts, since they are inevitable from the laws of our constitution, and since man, having no separate personality, can be under no sanctions of individual obligation. The best and the worst in his eyes are one and the same. The deceived and the deceiver are alike divine. We recoil from such a shocking thought. Christianity, on the other hand, speaks the conviction of the heart, in its high morality, its demand for holiness as the condition of seeing God. And it has the response of our bosoms in warning the sinner from the evil of his ways, and in hanging up a deathless crown before him who seeks after righteousness. Pantheism scoffs at the idea of mediation. Humanity, by the fire on ten thousand altars, craves it, and Christianity offers it. Pantheism offers no code, no rules for our guidance towards God and our neighbour, condemns the practical, honours rhapsodies, vagaries, and impulses; or if it preaches work, inspires it with no living principle to direct it. Christianity is sober and practical, and turns to whatever can alleviate our sorrows, or elevate and bless us, while her precepts embrace the whole circle of human relationship. Mr. Emerson has no future to which to invite us, or, by the prospect of which, to cheer us. Absorption, as when a rain drop falls on the ocean—is the fate of all alike. Christianity speaks to the innermost soul of the race in opening the gates of immortality and letting the light from beyond stream down on our footsteps. There is no better test of a system than its fitness to our need when a spiritual power alone can sustain us. In life we may dream our

theories, but death is the experiment that proves their worth. If any one wish to see Mr. Emerson's philosophy in the hour of trial, let him read the last letter of John Sterling to Mr. Carlyle, who had led him from his early faith to the dreams of Pantheism. "Certainty," he tells us, "he has none, and has nothing for it but to keep shut the lid of those secrets, with all the iron weights in his power." But as Mr. Carlyle's Pantheism is much milder than Mr. Emerson's, even this dreary letter would not be dark enough for one of his disciples in the hour of death. Contrast with this agonizing uncertainty, with the poor human bravery that tries to keep down the lid of the future, the triumph of having death swallowed up in victory, and all tears wiped off from all faces. Compare its darkness and unspeakable sadness with the Christian vision of the future to Bunyan, tintured by no philosophy, with his bad spelling, his life in jail, and his homespun trust in the word of God. Remember the legend he saw glittering over the gate of the Celestial City. "Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the Tree of Life, and may enter in through the gates into the City." Listen to his sight of its glories—"Now just as the gates were opened to let in the men, I looked in after them, and, behold, the City shone like the Sun, the streets also were paved with gold; and in them walked many men, with crowns on their heads, palms in their hands and golden harps to sing praises withal." To shoot out into Infinite darkness, and keep as brave a heart as may be, as its unknown possibilities approach, is all that Mr. Emerson's creed gives to soften a dying pillow. Christianity sheds on that of a dying saint the splendours of an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away, fills his soul with the fall of immortal music, and makes dissolution only a death-like sleep, a gentle wafting to immortal life. Which of the two speaks most truly to our wants and our longings? Let us pay our regards to that which adds another world to this, and weaves roses and amaranths for our brows when we reach it.

It is a striking enforcement of humility to find modern philosophy fail so utterly in its efforts to make a Religion for itself. It would be well for Mr. Emerson, could he remember and receive the conclu-

sion of one whom he professes to respect above most, and who searched into Truth with an earnestness from which our modern Faith-makers might take a lesson—I mean Socrates, who sums up in his *Apology* the experience of his life, in the declaration that Apollo had taught him this one thing, that human wisdom was worth little or nothing. Better than the dream of genius, or the intuitions of pure reason, better than the world without a God, without a conscience, without immortality, is the trust of the veriest babe or suckling, in whom God has perfected praise; nobler than the loftiest deification of man, grander than that he should be dignified with the most sounding titles, is the prayer of the publican, "God be merciful to me a sinner." I set up against all philosophers of Mr. Emerson's school, the picture of Cowper's Cottager, and leave you to say whether she or they be the brighter mirror of the Highest Truth:—

"Yon Cottager, who weaves at her own door,
Pillows and bobbins all her little store,
Content though mean, and cheerful, if not gay
Shuffling her threads about the livelong day,
Just earns a scanty pittance, and, at night,
Lies down secure, her heart and pocket light;
She, for her humble sphere by nature fit,
Has little understanding, and no wit,
Receives no praise, but (though her lot be such,
Toilsome and indigent) she renders much:
Just knows, and knows no more, her Bible true,
A truth the brilliant Frenchman never knew,
And in that charter reads with sparkling eyes,
Her title to a treasure in the skies.

Oh happy peasant! Oh unhappy bard!
His the mere tinsel, hers the rich reward;
He, praised, perhaps, for ages yet to come,
She, never heard of half a mile from home.
He, lost in errors his vain heart prefers,
She, safe in the simplicity of hers."

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